



STATE SENATOR **BRUCE PATTERSON** IN THE LOOP ★

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01/13/06

Town Hall on Education, Thursday, January 12

Senator Patterson hosted a Town Hall on Education, Thursday evening, January 12, at Schoolcraft College. About eighty people were able to come to hear Michigan Superintendent of Schools, Mike Flanagan. He spoke on proposed standards for high school graduation, which may affect the class of 2010, if adopted soon. Michigan is the only state in the country which had a sole course requirement for graduation – civics. All 49 other states had higher standards, including math, sciences, and language. Only a third of Michigan districts even required algebra. New standards will challenge and better prepare students for the highly competitive job market, as well as for college.

New programs for career-oriented technical training will incorporate the elements of Algebra, for instance, but in a practical, applied format, such as carpentry or other building trades.

The Education Department team that developed the proposal interviewed officials of the five states which had most recently updated their standards and had been able to get feedback on the results. Taking the best, and avoiding the pitfalls, Michigan's new standards ought now to be the best in the country. One innovation is to require the taking of an on-line course of some sort, so students will have that experience and be able to utilize it in their future.

Superintendent Flanagan fielded many questions from parents, teachers, and school administrators, giving solid answers to many of these. Many teachers pointed out the value of the new proposals, and urged the teaching of foreign languages early in a child's years.

Up to three more such meetings in the Seventh District are in planning stages now. One may be of the Senate's Education Committee, which might become a joint Senate-House Committee meeting.



Sen. Patterson converses with Superintendent Flanagan during Education Town Hall, at Schoolcraft College last evening.

For many, it may have been a first look inside the beautiful college facility, and a tempting glimpse at its Culinary Arts facility. The meeting ended at 8:30 p.m.

** If you would like to receive direct notice please send your request for this to Mr. Chris Gillett at cgillett@senate.mi.gov or (517) 373-0753. Thank you.

Budget Forecast for '06-07

Yesterday, the first revenue estimating conference of 2006 was held, bringing together fiscal experts from the private and public sectors to forecast the state's revenue in the coming year.

The good news: state revenues will go up slightly for fiscal 2006-07.

The state's general fund is expected to be about 2 percent higher, with \$8.377 billion in revenue. Revenue to the School Aid Fund is projected to increase by 2.72 percent, to \$11.5 billion.

The bad news: Fiscal Year 2007 is going to start off with at least a \$73 million deficit. Like the past couple of years, the state's budget will likely garner great attention from lawmakers.

Inquiring Minds Might Want to Know

Do you want to know whom your neighbor is calling on the cell phone? Do you really trust your boyfriend's claims about the frequent calls on his cell phone? How about your boss? Want to find out for sure?

Several companies claim to offer such services, though none seems affiliated with any major cellular telephone or VOIP service (voice over Internet protocol) providers.

Senator Patterson, R-Canton, Chairman of the Technology & Energy Committee, said he was going to hold hearings on this issue and introduce legislation if needed. A first hearing is set for January 18. "This appears to be a growing problem around the country," Patterson said.

Reports suggest that in some cases, telephone company insiders secretly sell customers' phone-call lists to online brokers, despite strict telephone company rules against such deals. Companies offering such services found on the Internet sell this information for about \$90.

"The public is concerned about identity theft. The Michigan Legislature has already acted to provide such protections to consumers. This seems like the next logical step. People value their privacy," said Patterson. As Chairman of the Committee, Patterson has guided legislation to combat spyware and SPAM through the committee.

Office Hours schedule for January, 2006

On **Tuesdays** of each week, starting Jan 10th, Sue Trussell, Sen. Patterson's District Representative, will hold office hours from 11:00am to 1:00pm at the following places:

- January 17th Northville District Library, 212 West Cady Street; (248) 349-3020.
(includes Northville Twp constituents, and others)
- January 24th Trenton Memorial Library
(includes all Downriver constituents, and others)
- January 31st Plymouth District Library
(includes Plymouth Twp constituents, and others)

Contact Information

Thank you for your interest in our current state issues. If you would like to receive future updates via e-mail, please contact my office at < senbpatterson@senate.michigan.gov >. You can also visit me in my Lansing office at 505 Farnum Building, just across S. Capitol Avenue from the state Capitol; or you can send me mail at P. O. Box 30036, Lansing, MI 48909. Telephone (517) 373-7350 or (866) 262-7307; fax (517) 373-9228. I want to hear from you.

See the *Legislative Questionnaire* on the Website, too! Your responses are welcomed!